

Being Human in the Technological Society

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Abstract

In this essay, the author examines Jacques Ellul's biblical foundation for his critique of technological society—his reading of Romans chapter eight. The author argues that Ellul's primary concern is for humanity in the midst of a technological society. She then considers Ellul's thoughts about being human based on his reading of the Apostle Paul's writings. She goes on to discuss some of the ways that social media and artificial intelligence are changing our humanity. Finally, the author concludes with a brief summary of Ellul's proposed solutions to living in our social media, AI, and technological culture.

Introduction

In 1909, E.M. Forster, the British novelist, essayist, and social and literary critic, wrote his science fiction short story "The Machine Stops."¹ In this story, Forster describes a society controlled by technology and machines. People live underground without the desire to ascend above ground to connect with the natural world. There is no ventilation, yet there is fresh air—air conditioning? There are no windows, but there is light, artificial lighting. There are no musical instruments, and yet, with the aid of technology, music fills the room. Everything a person wants can be had at the push of a button. In this technologically controlled world, people have come to love and even worship the machine, forgetting that it was created by humans.

The Machine Stops revolves around a woman named Vashti and her son, Kuno. Even though Kuno lives halfway around the world, Vashti can talk with him through a machine. In fact, she has thousands of friends whom she can talk with; as the story says, "human intercourse had advanced enormously."² Vashti can also provide lectures using the machine. She has grown to like talking with her son via the machine and has absolutely no desire ever to go see him in person; even the thought of physically touching him was repugnant to her. However, Kuno begs her to come see him as he has something to tell her that he can't tell her through the machine. Vashti relents and takes an "air-ship" to see him. When she finally arrives, her son tells her the horrifying news—he has broken free of the machine world and has made his way to the outside world. He has seen the earth, the sun, the moon, and the stars. He had experienced the fresh air. He has experienced freedom. Vashti is so distraught over her son's disclosure that she leaves him in sadness, intending never to see him again. At the end of the story, the machine stops. Technological society crashes, and the people who have become so acclimated to it cry out to be euthanized—they want to die rather than experience freedom in the natural world.

As early as the 1800s, with the Industrial Revolution, historians and literary writers had been writing about the dangers of technology.³ However, in the twentieth century, no writer was more prolific and penetrating than Jacques Ellul (1912-1994), the French sociologist, lay pastor,

and cultural critic from Bordeaux. Seventy years ago, in 1954, Ellul penned one of his seminal works, which examined the nature of the technological machine world, the technological milieu. In *The Technological Society*, Ellul began his in-depth critique of technique. In this work, as well as in his later books *The Technological System* (1977) and *The Technological Bluff* (1990) and his renowned work *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes* (1968), he analyzed the qualities and characteristics of the technological environment intending to help human beings see how they were becoming enslaved to technology. Ellul wanted to help people find a means of escape. He wrote over fifty books and thousands of articles regarding the world we are immersed in.⁴ Even today, his work continues to be translated from French to English.

Ellul has often been hailed as a prophet; he was not just an observer of technology's immediate effects but a visionary who foresaw its long-term impact on humanity. He recognized that technology doesn't just bring about changes; it fundamentally transforms individuals and the environment in which we live, reshaping our very existence. According to Ellul, we no longer exist in an economic capitalist culture; we now inhabit a technological environment—the world of the machine. Technology, he argued, is not just a neutral tool we use for good or evil but an autonomous force that shapes our lives, often with profound and always with unforeseen consequences.⁵ According to Ellul, every technological advancement comes at a price, and humans are paying the price for living in the technological world.

Ellul identified efficiency as the main characteristic of technique and technology.⁶ With every new technological invention, people are working on becoming more and more efficient, and in the process, they adopt the values of technology. While social media technologies have given new avenues of communication, they, along with artificial intelligence technologies, are ushering in a world of problems. Some scholars have criticized Ellul's analysis of technology as just focusing on the problems, overly pessimistic and deterministic.⁷ However, this critique fails to grasp the essence of Ellul's unique dialectical worldview and his dialectical method of writing. For every sociological book that Ellul wrote, he wrote a corresponding theological counterpoint. He viewed all fifty books as interconnected chapters in one overarching narrative.⁸ It was from his theological readings that Ellul found positive hope for humanity.

Ellul's Biblical Foundation for Understanding Humanity in a Technological Society

While most scholars have primarily focused on Ellul's analysis of technique and technology, it is important to understand that Ellul was primarily interested in helping people thrive and flourish as human beings. He wanted to help break the chains that enslaved people in their technological world. The chains did not necessarily come from technology itself but the transfer of the sacred into technology, placing one's faith in and worshipping it.⁹ The questions that underlie Ellul's analysis are: How can people thrive within the technological environment, and how can they find freedom while living amid a technological milieu? As a young man, Ellul had his own personal experience of breaking free from the technological environment. It happened due to a dramatic encounter with a living transcendent God.¹⁰ This experience was so personal and profound that he chose not to share the details with others.¹¹ After his conversion, he started reading atheistic books to examine his experience from a different perspective.¹² However, Ellul concluded that the only certainty for humanity, the only way to escape the "machine" or the technological society, is to place faith in God. In a society that has rejected the transcendent, Ellul states,

We must bow our heads and acknowledge that we have basically been deluded—all of us, rich Europeans and poor Africans, nationalists and antinationalists, virtuous colonizers and virtuous anticolonizers, the gluttons and the starving, exploiters and exploited, liberals and conservatives, technologists and ecologists, believers and skeptics, all of us have been equally deluded because we played our game without the presence of the Ultimate; in building our world we excluded the possibility of an initiative from God—from the God who began it all and who can always lay the foundations for a new beginning, because he alone is new.¹³

From Ellul's reading of the Old and New Testament scripture, he developed his understanding of what it means to be human and what it means to break free from the machine world. Ellul grounded his analysis of humanity on his understanding of the Trinity, which states that there is one God but three persons. God is the creator, the savior, and the revealer. According to Ellul, the difference between animals and humans is that humans are created in the image, in the likeness, of the triune God.¹⁴ Genesis, written in the seventh century B.C., states, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."¹⁵ The Psalmist, David, writes, "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made... Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them."¹⁶ Throughout Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, the writers declare that God created human beings.¹⁷ He created humans for a purpose, as communicated by the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Ephesians, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."¹⁸ And He created human beings to give them a future--and a hope, as God communicated through Jeremiah the prophet, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."¹⁹

Human beings were created to communicate with the word. According to Ellul, God speaks, and we are created in his likeness with the ability to speak. Through the word, we can communicate with God and with others. To be human essentially means having language. Ellul writes, "This word is the gift of God par excellence; it is human mystery, endlessly leading to truth."²⁰ Ellul also wrote that God speaks to Himself; there is an ongoing dialogue within the Trinity. Therefore, created in the image of God, human beings can speak, communicate, and dialogue with language.²¹ In *The Humiliation of the Word* (1985), Ellul writes of the devastating demise of language and the word.

Ellul's understanding of what it means to be human began to develop as a young man. After converting to a relationship with God, Ellul had a second epiphany, or as he called it, "a watershed experience,"²² in 1934. He said, "At around age twenty-two, a second stage in my conversion came in reading chapter eight of the Epistle to the Romans; it was an awesome experience for me... It gave me a response both on the individual level and on the collective level. I saw a perspective beyond history, one that is definitive."²³ Ellul also said, "I'd never been seized by a written text. Never before had a text so suddenly transformed itself into Absolute Truth... the answer to so many questions... a living contemporary Word, which I could no longer question."²⁴ Ellul writes,

I can't even describe what happened then. Nor do I think it could possibly be explained psychologically. But this eighth chapter of Romans, which I'd already read many times, suddenly became many things for me. It became the answer to so many of the questions I'd been asking. It became the place where I simultaneously encountered the Absolute

and Eternity. It became a living, contemporary Word, which I could no longer question, what was beyond all discussion. And that Word then became the point of departure for all my reflections in the faith.²⁵

We often think of Karl Marx's influence on Ellul's dialectical thinking, but it is not as frequently noted that the Apostle Paul influenced Ellul's life-long work as well. His reading of the Epistle to the Romans became an essential basis for his cultural critique. Certainly, he drew from the entire Biblical canon, but this early reading of St. Paul influenced many of his future works. In fact, "Ellul avowed that this text indirectly, without his awareness, inspired *all* of his research for the next fifty years."²⁶

What was so life-changing for Ellul as he read this Pauline epistle? What made it foundational for his thinking about living in a technological society? The Apostle Paul, formerly Saul of Tarsus, wrote his letter to the Romans around 55 A.D. to explain and support the role of faith for Jews and Gentiles. While reading Romans, Ellul's eyes were opened to what it means to be human, especially to be human living in the temporal world. Ellul began to understand the true meaning of freedom as he read Paul's words. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh..."²⁷ Ellul, then, realized that God, Himself, is the living God, the Wholly Other God, the God who is love, and a God who is free.²⁸ And it is God alone who can give freedom.

In his reading of Romans, Ellul also learned that creation, too, can experience freedom from corruption. He read, "Creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God."²⁹ Ellul went on to write about freedom. In his book *The Ethics of Freedom* (1976), Ellul continued to emphasize that the alienation that human beings are experiencing today comes from living in a temporal technological society. In his words, "Man's enemy is no longer another class of men, nor is it a relatively simple system set up in the interests of a special class. It is a collection of mechanisms of indescribable complexity—technics, propaganda, state, administration, planning, ideology, urbanization, social technology."³⁰ It is the world of the machine. A world that people are immersed in, and there seems to be no way out. And, in many cases, people like Vashti have grown very satisfied with this world. Moving beyond this world is threatening and fearful, but freedom only comes when one can escape it. But how does one move beyond the technological society? Ellul answers that true and ultimate freedom can only come through the resurrected Jesus Christ, who died for the sins of the individual and the world.

Ellul learned from Paul's epistle to the Romans that in Christ, human beings are no longer slaves but are the sons and daughters of a living God.³¹ As the Apostle Paul writes:

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!' The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.³²

As Ellul read the eighth chapter of Romans, he began to understand that the *law* was powerless to change the human heart; only the Spirit can transform human beings and set people free. Humans can be transformed and provided freedom by the Spirit of God. In his 1936 doctorate, *The History and Legal Nature of the Mancipium*, Ellul wrote on human beings' literal and physical enslavement. The Mancipium was a term from Roman law referring to a slave

captured in war by an enemy or the selling of one's son to pay off the father's debt. As a law professor, Ellul taught at the Faculty of Law in Montpellier. In 1946, Ellul wrote *The Theological Foundation of Law*, where he continued to consider the relationship between the written Word of God and the law.³³

From the Apostle Paul, Ellul also discovered the importance of Jesus Christ's life lived in and through humanity. Human beings were created both to have fellowship with God and to experience His daily presence. Reading Romans, Ellul's eyes were opened to humanity's calling to be "conformed to the image of His Son."³⁴ Human beings can bring the life and presence of Christ into the temporal material technological society. It was here that Ellul understood the reality of living in two cities, the world and the city of God. However, Ellul also understood that Jesus Christ could become present in the believer's life in this world as they allowed the Holy Spirit to live in and through them. Subsequently, Ellul wrote *The Presence of the Kingdom* (1948), where he elucidated the significance of having Christ present in our lives, living through our lives as we navigate the modern world.

As he read Romans eight, Ellul gained an understanding of the profound significance and relevance of the Holy Spirit in bestowing humanity with life and empowering humans to live life. Here, he learned that human beings are actually given life by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not a concept, but a transformative force mentioned throughout the Old and New Testaments. In the first chapter of Genesis, the scripture explains that the Holy Spirit was not just present but actively involved in creation. It says, "The Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters."³⁵ In the book of Numbers, the scripture recounts how the Lord spoke to Moses and said, "Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man who has the Spirit, and lay your hand on him."³⁶ In the Book of Judges, the scripture talks about Samson and how the "Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him, and although he had nothing in his hand, he tore the lion in pieces."³⁷ And, from Ezekiel, the Bible says, "... I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules."³⁸

In his reading of Romans, Ellul learned that it is through the Spirit that "we become children of God."³⁹ Ellul also began to see the dialectic between a mind set on the flesh, the world, technique, and a mind set on the Spirit.⁴⁰ He writes, "Thus, it is the Holy Spirit who henceforth inspires our minds and enables us to discover new ways of thought, and a new understanding of the world in which we live."⁴¹ Ellul believed that being human equates to possessing the spirit of life, a divine essence. God, the Spirit, is the source of this life, not just life in this world but for eternity. In *Reason for Being: A Meditation on Ecclesiastes* (1990), Ellul writes: "This breath is the very breath of the Creator, making a person a living being. And God the Creator is himself called the Living One."⁴² Elaborating on the Spirit, Ellul writes:

The spirit is not some vague 'spiritualist' evanescence. The spirit is what makes us fully alive. It makes human history and creativity possible. The spirit makes relationships possible (thus the dead body has no further relationship with anyone, after the spirit has left it)... Spirit' means something only if we look at it concretely, that is, spirit as what gives and maintains life. At the moment of death, this spirit returns to the eternally Living One.⁴³

Ellul refers to the Gospel of John to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between the Spirit and Christ. He quotes Jesus as saying, "The words that I have spoken to you are Spirit and Life."⁴⁴ Ellul also observes that "Spirit and life are indissolubly linked" and notes that Jesus made "no distinction between the spirit as the breath of life and the Holy Spirit that sustained him."⁴⁵ Additionally, Ellul references Jesus' words, "Father, I commit my spirit into your hands,"⁴⁶ to emphasize this point.

An essential aspect of being human is our awareness of our mortality. According to Ellul, what sets humans apart from animals is the presence of the Holy Spirit and the unique understanding that our lives will end. Humans' awareness of their mortality gives them a sense of history and purpose. Unlike animals, we make our lives meaningful through work, thanks to our capacity to create history.⁴⁷

Human beings are also unique in that they have the ability to pray. In his reading of Romans, Ellul learned that it is the Holy Spirit that "enables us to pray."⁴⁸ In 1971, Ellul wrote *Prayer and Modern Man*. In that book, he notes that part of being human is our inward longing to pray. He explains, "It is man's nature to appeal to a Supreme Being, an Almighty. Man has never been able to live without praying. It is one of the very dimensions of his being."⁴⁹

Human beings cannot live without praying or without a god. In *The Technological Society*, Ellul explains that "humans cannot live without the sacred. They therefore transfer their sense of the sacred to the very thing which has destroyed its former object: to technique itself."⁵⁰ In his 1992 book *Technopoly*, Neil Postman examined this crucial aspect of humanity. Building on Ellul's observations, he explained how our society holds technology in high esteem, almost like a sacred entity. According to him, in this tech world, there is a belief in limitless progress, rights without responsibilities, and a focus on technology without considering the associated costs. The Technopoly narrative lacks a moral center and prioritizes efficiency, self-interest, and economic growth over traditional values. It promises a utopian existence through technological advancements, disregarding traditional beliefs' stability and orderliness and glorifying a life of technical skills, expertise, and the pursuit of consumption.⁵¹

All throughout history, human beings have created their own idols and gods. In his book *The End of Education: Redefining the Value of School* (1995), Postman discusses the "necessity of gods."⁵² He said, in his own time, he saw "the gods of communism, fascism, and Nazism, each of which held out the promise of heaven but led only to hell."⁵³ Postman referred to humans as the "god-making species."⁵⁴

Human beings need hope. It was also through his reading of Romans that Ellul's attention turned to understanding hope.⁵⁵ In Romans, he read, "For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope, because who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with endurance."⁵⁶ Ellul went on to write *Hope in Time of Abandonment* (1972).

Human beings are created with the capacity to love. It was also from his reading of Romans that Ellul learned about God's overwhelming love for humanity, which can help humans overcome darkness. As the Apostle wrote,

...in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him who *loved* us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to

come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the *love* of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.⁵⁷

For Ellul, to be human means to love. God is ultimately a God of love. He is a God who serves humanity. Therefore, because we are created in His image, we, too, are created to love Him as well as love and serve others. In Ellul's words, "...as God rules over the world, not by his power but in and through love, so humanity is given to rule in and through love."⁵⁸ Learning of God's tremendous love for humanity, Ellul wrote on freedom, love, and power.⁵⁹ Through his sociological writings, Ellul examined the powers of this world, the psychological powers of propaganda, and the sociological powers of technology—the machine culture. He continued throughout his career to provide a positive vision of hope for humanity; the positive vision revealed to him as the Holy Spirit opened his eyes to see and understand the Word.

After gaining a deeper insight into Christ's impact on individuals and society, Ellul and his good friend Bernard Charbonneau became engaged in the personalist movement.⁶⁰ This movement emerged in the early twentieth century and aimed to comprehend and advocate for personhood within a growing mass society.⁶¹ This was a time when fascism and communism were on the rise. In his early 1937 essay, "Fascism, Son of Liberalism,"⁶² Ellul analyzed the problematic roots of liberalism and fascism. His underlying critique was that the material had become the "foundation of life."⁶³ Instead of being built on the "Spirit of life," life was built off a material bedrock. According to Ellul, as a result of the liberalism of the nineteenth century, there was a proliferation of thought, but thought became very abstract and disconnected from reality. Relativism dominated, so one thought became just as valuable as another; any thought was "admissible," and theories had no practical value. "Thought was glorified as never before."⁶⁴ In this early essay, Ellul noted how "techniques triumph over the human."⁶⁵

Later, Ellul wrote about the disappearance of the human in this technological environment. He writes,

the disappearance of the human being as an individual and a person, and the emergence of the human as fragment, as cell, cog, switch, coded number, of the human as an opportunity, a bacterium, a pretext, a microprocessor of the unified ensemble that absorbs all things into its unanimous disorder. The only hope, given this situation, lies in reality utterly beyond the reach of that limitless expansion, that is, located beyond finitude, outside the realities accessible to technology, in an essentially inaccessible reality. That is to say, God.⁶⁶

If Ellul were asked what it means to be human, I believe he would answer that to be human means to be created in the likeness of God, to be given life by the Spirit, to be empowered by the Spirit, to be created to be free and to have communication and fellowship with the Living God. Being human means having language, which allows people to communicate, think, and reason. To be human means to have freedom, to have hope, and to have love. To be human means to be able to pray and to worship God. To be human means to be aware of one's mortality. This understanding of humanity formed the basis for Ellul's ongoing critique of technique. It has been seventy years since he wrote *The Technological Society*. During that time, technology has grown exponentially, just as Ellul predicted. In the 21st century, society has also moved deeper and deeper into its use and reliance on technology.

Humanity in a Social Media and AI Culture

Today, people are immersed in communication technologies. We have unmitigated information overload, fragmentation of information, massive misinformation, disinformation, and the corrupt monetization of false information and false narratives. We live in a propaganda world.⁶⁷ Social media apps proliferate. We have Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, WeChat, TikTok, Telegram, and Snapchat; we have Pinterest, Reddit, LinkedIn, Discord, Tumblr, and Instagram; plus, a growing host of other social media platforms. According to the research firm Statista, three billion people use Facebook monthly, accounting for roughly 37 percent of the world's population. WhatsApp is a messaging app used by people in over 180 countries and boasts an estimated 2.78 billion users. With 2.49 billion monthly active users, YouTube is a video-sharing platform where users watch a billion hours of videos daily. Instagram has 2.04 billion monthly active users.⁶⁸

It is said that children will spend nine years of their lives on social media, which may be low. Social media is not the only technology transforming our lives and culture; artificial intelligence is now taking over as a controlling technology. Artificial intelligence has already proven to be dehumanizing, as artists, musicians, writers, and others have lost their creative work and careers to AI. Through massive data grabs, AI steals the artwork of humans, musicians' music compositions, and writers' words. Of course, AI can give as well as take away, but people must be able to think critically about the detrimental effects as well as the benefits for humanity. What is happening to humanity in our social media and AI culture? Hundreds of studies are now addressing that question. Here, I will briefly discuss four revolutionary changes that took place with the introduction of new communication technologies.

Changes in Cognition

First, human cognition has changed with every change in communication technology. This isn't a new insight—Socrates recognized it as far back as 370 BC. In Plato's "Phaedrus," Socrates mentioned that the discovery of the alphabet would lead to forgetfulness in learners, as they would rely on written characters instead of their memories.⁶⁹ Nearly 2000 years later, in 1962, Marshall McLuhan wrote *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man*, where he discussed the transformation of culture with the invention of the alphabet and then the printing press. In 1967, McLuhan wrote *The Medium is the Massage*, where he explained how all forms of media profoundly impact us, affecting every aspect of our lives.⁷⁰

In his seminal book *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (1982), Walter Ong explained how cognition and consciousness changed with the introduction of literacy. He highlighted the differences between the thought processes of those living before writing and those living after the invention of the alphabet, writing, and literacy. Oral thought tends to be closely tied to the natural environment and concrete experiences, while literate thought is more abstract, analytical, sequential, and classificatory.⁷¹

Jacques Ellul focused on the transformation in cognition as we have moved into an image-based culture. In his discussion of the "Image-Oriented Person,"⁷² Ellul identified many cognitive changes resulting from living in the mass-produced image world. Primarily, there is a

total disconnect from the natural world. The image milieu takes the place of the natural environment. Like life in E.M. Forster's machine world, people grow accustomed to living in the world of technologized images. In this world, an individual's thinking is based on emotion rather than logic and reasoning.⁷³ People need the stimulus of images to help generate thinking.⁷⁴ People lose their ability to think critically.⁷⁵ Without language, there is a breakdown in human relationships.⁷⁶ Without language, people lose their freedom. As Ellul writes, "...in the last analysis, the image-oriented person has lost his deep freedom by penetrating into this milieu of images produced by technique."⁷⁷

Neil Postman discussed the shift towards an image-based society in his well-known book *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* (1985). In the book, he explained how televised images have significantly impacted every aspect of society, including politics, religion, and education. Television has also affected our cognitive abilities, leading to fragmented thinking, emotion-based reasoning, and cognitive conditioning by image-based television. Postman also wrote about *The Disappearance of Childhood* (1982) in television culture, a phenomenon that has only worsened with the rise of digital Internet culture.

Changes in the Structures of the Brain

Second, not only does cognition change, but the human brain changes as people use communication technology. Thanks to 21st-century advancements in Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), neuroscientists can now observe actual structural changes in the brain when people use various technologies. They have found that activities such as reading, writing, using the computer, and engaging in social media interact with the brain. One study even discovered that the brains of adolescents aged three years in just a 10-month period during Covid. As students were isolated at home, their main source of social interaction came from their time on the Internet, social media apps, and Zoom. As a result, interpersonal communication and face-to-face communication were detrimentally limited. Studies have shown that internet use impacts attention capacities, memory processes, and social cognition. According to research, "Overall, the available evidence indicates that the Internet can produce both acute and sustained alterations in each of these areas of cognition, which may be reflected in changes in the brain."⁷⁸

The Center for Humane Technology delved into the impact of social media on the brain in its workshop, "Social Media and the Brain: Why is persuasive technology so hard to resist?"⁷⁹ Social media marketers use psychographics and the latest brain research to understand their audiences. This knowledge can then be used to target messages directly to every person on social media.⁸⁰ Drawing on current brain research, they explain that the brain is more attentive to threatening and risky content to ensure our safety. It tends to remember negative experiences more vividly than positive ones to help us anticipate potential risks. There is a tendency towards popular opinions to build stronger communities based on shared beliefs. The human brain is prone to cognitive biases, which social media exploit by creating a sense of urgency, encouraging constant engagement, promoting negative and fearful content, fostering a comparison-based environment with others, and isolating individuals within social bubbles. Social media capitalizes on these natural human brain tendencies.⁸¹

For example, in March 2018, a consulting firm in England called Cambridge Analytica hacked into Facebook and stole the personal data of 50 million users. They used this data to create psychological profiles of individuals and targeted them with political propaganda during the 2016 Presidential election. While Cambridge Analytica no longer exists, other technology

firms continue to use their knowledge of the brain and psychology to target users for commercial and political purposes. Our personal data entered on computers, the Internet, and iPhones is used to track our every move, including our location, physical activities, beliefs, and values. This raises legitimate concerns about the extent to which technology is now using us rather than vice versa.

Changes in Language

Third, language is changing. As well as changes in cognition and structures of the human brain, we also see unprecedented changes in language. Language, the word, was of central concern to Ellul. In *The Humiliation of the Word* (1985), he writes,

The word is greatly mutilated, cadaverous, and almost dead, but we must become conscious of what this means: our whole civilization is loathed along with the word. The word signals our civilizations' possible death and provides the channel through which the poison can get in. Anyone wishing to save humanity today must first of all save the word...The word is the place to begin. It is humiliated, crushed, and meaningless. We must restore its royal domain and its demands."⁸²

As human beings created in the likeness of God, we are created with the ability to communicate with language. We are "time-binders,"⁸³ as Alfred Korzybski, the Polish language theorist, would say. Because of our abilities to symbolize and use words and language, we can store our histories and pass on our knowledge to future generations. We can bind time by building off the intellectual and spiritual labors of the past. This is largely what makes us human. But what are we doing with our word-creating abilities?⁸⁴ What has become of logic, reasoning, dialogue, and communication?

As Ellul keenly observed and thoroughly analyzed the shift from a literacy-word-based environment to an image-based environment, his main concern was the impact of this shift on humanity, especially on the human ability to hear and communicate with the Living God. Ellul says, "Only the word can convey the Word of God, the sole means God used to reveal himself to us."⁸⁵ If people lose the ability to use and understand words, how will they develop a relationship with a God who speaks? Without understanding the word, how will people come to know the Logos, the eternal word? How will people pray?

Ellul also understood that losing language would affect human creativity and thinking abilities. He said, "We forget all too easily that imagination is the basic characteristic of intelligence, so a society in which people lose their capacity to conjure up symbols also loses its inventiveness and its ability to act."⁸⁶

Ellul was very aware of the dangers of living in a computer and robotics world. He wrote in the late 1980s,

Computers can understand human phrases relating to acts and limited objectifiable concepts. They can give information and obey orders. But this plainly has nothing whatever to do with the word or speech. The real danger and serious risk that we run with the proliferation of computers and robots is that being forced into relation with machines will slowly reduce the word to the nonhuman, external, objective aspect, and this, in turn, will make the word

something that is of use only for action. Once this comes about, we will lose our human distinctiveness.⁸⁷

Today, in our social media and artificial intelligence culture, we see the complete breakdown and humiliation of the word. Many researchers are studying how language is changing. With the advent of the iPhone and texting, language is being irrevocably mutilated. One study discusses the linguistic shifts and the dramatic changes in language. “There is an increase in the use of abbreviations, emoticons, and distinctive terms specific to social media that affect the way humans communicate in a digital context.”⁸⁸ Words have become shortened for communication efficiency's sake, with hundreds of abbreviations such as LOL, OMG, BRB, IDK, IMO, FYI, NP, BFF, GTG, etc. It is now a part of the new social media and iPhone culture to communicate with abbreviations, emojis, and memes such as a smiley face, a thumbs up, a sad face, praying hands, and thousands more, which all substitute for language. There are changes in grammar and spelling.⁸⁹ As well, researchers note that: “Social media generates new language and phrases due to online interactions. For example, expressions such as “selfie,” “hashtag,” and “meme” have evolved and become widespread as a result of social media.”⁹⁰

One study explains that “text-speak”—tweets, emails, posts, and comments are now considered a dialect of the English language, and children are considered bilingual if they can communicate in Standard English and text-speak.”⁹¹ The authors of this study summarized by saying, “The Internet has connected the world irrespective of time and space. Technology has influenced how we write, think, and communicate with others.”⁹²

The manipulation of language in our digital, algorithm-driven society is deeply troubling. Artificial intelligence and social media have led to the rise of deep fakes, gaslighting, and the complete abandonment of truth. Deep fakes use artificial intelligence to create images or sounds that look like real people or things, but in reality, they are just artificial manipulations. We have all seen how AI fraudsters can steal the voice or image of an actual person and send it to anyone anywhere in the world. They can also manipulate actual images in a way that makes them appear to be real when, in reality, they are manipulated images. One well-known example of the use of deep fakes is when a fraudster records the voice of a person and edits that voice to say something like, “Mom, I am in trouble. I need help. Can you send me some money right away?” The voice sounds identical to the mom’s child, and the mom sends money, but it is not for the child. In our social media and AI culture, it has become increasingly difficult to know what is true and false, what has been manipulated, and what represents reality.

Media gaslighting is another way language is used to manipulate and propagandize the masses. Gaslighting as a term comes from a 1938 play, *Gas Light*, and its 1944 film adaptation. In that film, a husband uses psychological manipulation to make his wife doubt her own perceptions of reality and, eventually, sanity. According to psychologists,

Gaslighting is an insidious form of manipulation and psychological control. Victims of gaslighting are deliberately and systematically fed false information that leads them to question what they know to be true, often about themselves. They may end up doubting their memory, their perception, and even their sanity. Over time, a gaslighter’s manipulations can grow more complex and potent, making it increasingly difficult for the victim to see the truth.⁹³

False narratives and photoshopped images are now created by people to gaslight masses of people to believe something that goes against their own reasoning, experience, or personal sensory perceptions. People can be censored when they do not go along with the messages. During Covid 19, doctors and nurses who disagreed with media propaganda were vilified, mocked, ridiculed, blacklisted, and in thousands of cases fired from their profession. In British Columbia, Canada, nurses and doctors who didn't follow the media propaganda are still not being hired back into their positions. Through gaslighting, the media creates a situation where people are led to doubt their decisions and reasoning abilities. Media, technologists, politicians, and the state now use their knowledge of psychology to create false narratives that will manipulate human beings.

We are currently witnessing what one can describe as the “great reversal” written about in the book of Isaiah 5:20. The prophet Isaiah warned, "Woe (judgment is coming) to those who call evil good, and good evil: who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!"⁹⁴ Ellul wrote, “Violence inevitably spreads everywhere when a culture destroys the opportunities for people to recognize good and evil, when ‘goodness’ (rectitude, honesty, fidelity, chaste love, etc.) is denounced as absolute evil (as a manifestation of hypocrisy and constraint), while evil is loudly extolled and transformed into good.”⁹⁵ In today's society, truth has become a lie, and lies have become truth with the help of social media, digital technology, algorithms, and AI. These changes impact human relationships, values, and, ultimately, humanity.

Changes in Mental Health

Finally, we are seeing unparalleled changes in mental health. Mental health is of central importance in 2024. We saw the overall decline in mental health during COVID-19, but it also continues to decline. It is widely known that in universities, school counselors cannot keep up with the number of students seeking help with anxiety, depression, self-harm, and suicidal thoughts. Suicide among young people has increased to the point that it is the second leading cause of death among people aged 10-14. Social media addiction is also a factor in mental health.

Ellul wrote about anxiety and said that it is one of the primary problems of people living in a technological society. In his words, “Everything threatens and overwhelms them; they can no longer put up any resistance...They are weak as they were never weak before, lacking both reason and conscience. In a fundamental contradiction, nobody knows what anxiety is and everybody's living it.”⁹⁶ Ellul goes on to elaborate and explain the anxiety people are experiencing. He writes.

The correlation between anxiety and the absence of belief, as our daily lives make plain, is incontestable. Western society has given up on providing its members with a global vision, a final purpose, and direction, and it no longer has any clear sense of identity. It is, to be sure, a tolerant society, but precisely to the extent that it has lost its identity and no longer knows what to make of itself. People go about like wanderers in the dark without a light to orient themselves by. There is no frame of reference, and this generates anxiety.”⁹⁷

Jacques Ellul's Antidote for Humanity in a Technological Society

What, then, is Ellul's solution for humanity living in a technological society? This is a crucial question as he proposes solutions that could help restore a civil and sane society. If we desire a rational, truthful, loving, compassionate, mentally healthy, and respectful society, we must address the problems resulting from social media, the internet, and AI culture. It is important to say that Ellul was not against technology. He was not trying to eliminate technology.⁹⁸ He passionately wanted to help people see that technology was a controlling force in society and an enslaving force in an individual's life.

Ellul was essentially interested in helping human beings *be* human. He says, "You are liberated, you are called to be human beings before God. Now decide for yourselves concretely what is to be done."⁹⁹ But what is to be done? How can we be all we were created to be as we live in a technological environment? How do we restore the Word and truth to its rightful place in our lives and society? Ellul was not without answers.

Ellul believed that we need to develop an awareness of our milieu and become aware that the technological milieu is vastly different from the natural world. He understood that people become enslaved to their technological world, just as Vashti did in E.M. Forster's fictional short story. People tend to find the technological world easy, efficient, overpowering, and addictive. To step outside of the technological milieu is frightening. People no longer know how they could live without it. Therefore, becoming aware is the first step to freedom. David W. Gill discusses Ellul's concept of awareness in *The Word of God in the Ethics of Jacques Ellul* (1984). According to him, awareness has four characteristics.

First, "Awareness is a matter of becoming aware of the Word of God in Jesus Christ and Scripture."¹⁰⁰ Awareness starts with understanding who we are meant to be as we are created in the likeness of God. In Christ, we have a new identity as sons and daughters of God. Romans chapter eight states, "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God."¹⁰¹ As children of God, we have a relationship with the Wholly Other. We also have a relationship with others in the family of God. We have purpose, meaning, and significance based on our identity in Christ. Ellul said, "I believe that life has meaning. We are not on earth by chance; we do not come from nowhere to go nowhere."¹⁰² We need to understand that the kind of awareness Ellul is talking about comes from the Living God alone. In Ellul's words,

Nothing that this world offers us is useful for this awareness. What is needed is a truth that enlightens human intellect through a greater light. What is needed is an authority that leads people necessarily to the act of understanding. What is needed is a power that reveals to people the authenticity of the milieu in which each one is placed. All this cannot come from human beings.¹⁰³

Second, we must develop an awareness of the world. As Gill writes, "Thus, awareness of the world will depend on a determined effort to reject all idealisms, myths, commonplaces, orthodoxies, and propaganda, and a will to analyze in some depth the forces that are determinative of life."¹⁰⁴ We need to understand the powers of the technological society, social media, and AI and recognize when we are influenced by propaganda and mass media. Along with this awareness of the world, we need to develop our critical thinking abilities to distinguish between the truth and the lie, between the image and reality. Since, as Ellul says, "Criticism is the preferred domain of the word,"¹⁰⁵ we must do everything to support both the oral and written

word. At a time when the teaching of history has been replaced with Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, we need to support the humanities: history, literature, philosophy, religion, media, and cultural studies, which have all been devalued in North American education.

Third, awareness involves moving out of the world of abstractions to see and meet the concrete needs of those living right before us.¹⁰⁶ Ellul's well-known maxim was, "Think globally, act locally."¹⁰⁷ He would encourage us to think about the concerns of our spouses, neighbors, students, brothers, sisters, church, and community members. We must get off our iPhones long enough to connect with those right in front of us. We must listen to and dialogue with our neighbors long enough to know how to best love and serve them.

Fourth, being aware involves being willing to share with others the importance of breaking free from technological slavery.¹⁰⁸ Billions of messages encourage us to stay connected to our communication technology, but few voices are communicating the impact of technology on our humanity. Jacques Ellul was a special, unique, and prominent voice in this regard. According to Ellul, the only way to break free is ultimately through the transcendent. Whether or not we are believers, it is important to inform people about social media's and AI's effects on their personhood. We must be at the forefront of raising awareness about how we are being deceived, manipulated, surveilled, propagandized, and diminished by the media. Furthermore, we must find ways to nurture humanity in our technology-dominated culture. How can we promote and support genuine freedom? How can we restore an appreciation of beauty, art, and history? How can we help reconnect people with nature? How can we bring people back to acknowledging and living in reality? How can we establish our own limits and help others establish limits on technology? We must address these huge questions as we move forward in the 21st century. We cannot address them all individually. That is why I am so thankful that we can address these questions together.

Notes

¹ E.M. Forster, "The Machine Stops." Transcribed from *The Eternal Moment and Other Stories* by E. M. Forster, Sidgwick & Jackson, Ltd. (London, 1928) and *The Collected Tales of E. M. Forster* (The Modern Library New York, 1968). Retrieved from

https://www.cs.ucdavis.edu/~koehl/Teaching/ECS188/PDF_files/Machine_stops.pdf

² Ibid.

³ For an example, see Thomas Carlyle, "Signs of the Times" 1829. From G. B. Tennyson, ed. *A Carlyle Reader: Selections from the Writings of Thomas Carlyle*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2001. This essay was brought to my attention and passed on to me by Ellul scholar Daniel Cerezuelle.

⁴ David W. Gill and David Lovekin, eds., *Political Illusion and Reality: Engaging the Prophetic Insights of Jacques Ellul* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2018) Preface, p. xi.

⁵ Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society*, trans. John Wilkinson. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964), 134.

⁶ Ibid., 80, 110.

⁷ This point has been made by numerous writers. See Jacob E. Van Vleet, *Dialectical Theology and Jacques Ellul: An Introductory Exposition* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), 2-3.

⁸ Jacques Ellul, *Perspectives on our Age*. William H. Vanderburg, ed., trans. Joachim Neugroschel. (New York: Seabury Press, 1981), 7-15. Also, see Jacques Ellul's "Dialectic" *Living Faith: Belief and Doubt in a Perilous World*, trans. Peter Heinegg. (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), 29-46.

⁹ See Jacques Ellul, *The New Demons* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), 206-207. Also, Clifford G. Christians "Ellul on Solution: An Alternative but No Prophecy" Clifford G. Christians and Jay M. Van Hook, eds. *Jacques Ellul: Interpretive Essays*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 149.

¹⁰ See Jacques Ellul, *Perspectives on our Age*, 14.

¹¹ Ibid., 14. Also, see *Jacques Ellul on Religion, Technology, and Politics: Conversations with Patrick Troude-Chastenot*, trans. Joan Mendes France (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 52-53.

¹² Jacques Ellul. *In Season Out of Season: An Introduction to the Thought of Jacques Ellul*, trans. Lani K. Niles Based on Interviews by Madeleine Garrigou-Lagrange. (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), 3.

¹³ Jacques Ellul, *Living Faith: Belief and Doubt in a Perilous World*, trans. Peter Heinegg. (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), 257-258.

¹⁴ Jacques Ellul "The First Creation Account" *On Freedom, Love, and Power*, Compiled, Edited, and trans. Willem H. Vanderburg. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 17-30.

¹⁵ Gen. 1:27

¹⁶ Ps. 139:13-18

¹⁷ See Isa. 43, Isa. 45:12; Eph. 2:10; Eph. 4:24; Heb. 11:3; Rev.4:11

¹⁸ Eph. 2:10

¹⁹ Jer. 29:11

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- ²⁰ Jacques Ellul, *The Humiliation of the Word*, trans., Joyce Main Hanks. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1985), 68.
- ²¹ See Jacques Ellul, *On Freedom, Love, and Power*, compiled, edited, and trans. Willem H. Vanderburg (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 52.
- ²² See “The Meaning of Freedom According to Saint Paul” in *Sources & Trajectories: Eight Early Articles by Jacques Ellul That Set the Stage*, trans. and commentary, Marva J. Dawn (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1997), 113-134.
- ²³ Jacques Ellul, *In Season out of Season*, 15.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, *The Meaning of Freedom*, 114.
- ²⁵ Jacques Ellul. “How I Discovered Hope,” trans. Alfred Krass and Martine Wessel, *Ellul Forum* 65 (Spring 2020), 5.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 114.
- ²⁷ Rom. 8: 2-3
- ²⁸ See Andrew Goddard, *Living the Word, Resisting the World: The Life and Thought of Jacques Ellul* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2002), 66.
- ²⁹ Rom. 8: 20
- ³⁰ Jacques Ellul, *The Ethics of Freedom*, trans. and edited Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1976), 27.
- ³¹ Rom. 8:15.
- ³² Rom.8:14-16
- ³³ Ellul’s background in law.
- ³⁴ Rom. 8: 29
- ³⁵ Gen.1:2
- ³⁶ Num. 27:18
- ³⁷ Judg. 14:6
- ³⁸ Ezek. 36:25-27
- ³⁹ Rom. 8: 16
- ⁴⁰ See Jacob Van Vleet, *Dialectical Theology and Jacques Ellul: An Introductory Exposition*.
- ⁴¹ Jacques Ellul, *The Presence of the Kingdom*, trans. Olive Wyon (New York: Seabury Press, 1967), 98.
- ⁴² Jacques Ellul, *Reason for Being: A Meditation on Ecclesiastes*, trans. Joyce Main Hanks (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1990), 289.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, 289
- ⁴⁴ John 6:63
- ⁴⁵ Ellul, *Reason for Being*, 290.
- ⁴⁶ Luke 23:46
- ⁴⁷ Ellul, *Reason for Being*, 290.
- ⁴⁸ Rom. 8: 25
- ⁴⁹ Jacques Ellul, *Prayer and Modern Man*. Trans. C. Edward Hopkin (New York: Seabury, 1970), 36.
- ⁵⁰ Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society*, 143; also, see Jacob E. Van Vleet and Jacob Marques Rollison, *Jacques Ellul: A Companion to His Major Works* (Oregon: Cascade Books, 2020), 94.
- ⁵¹ Neil Postman, *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), 179.
- ⁵² Neil Postman “The Necessity of Gods” in *The End of Education: Redefining the Value of School*. (Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), 3-18.
- ⁵³ Neil Postman, *The End of Education*, 6.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 6-7.
- ⁵⁵ Rom. 8: 24
- ⁵⁶ Rom. 8:24-25
- ⁵⁷ Rom. 8:37-38
- ⁵⁸ *Freedom, Love, and Power*, 33

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- ⁵⁹ See *On Freedom, Love, and Power* compiled, edited, and translated by Willem H. Vanderburg
- ⁶⁰ See Jacob Rollison, "Ellul and Personalism: A Brief Introduction to Ellul's Early Political Engagement." <https://ellul.org/themes/ellul-and-personalism/>
- ⁶¹ Ibid.
- ⁶² Jacques Ellul. "Fascism, Son of Liberalism," *Political Illusion and Reality: Engaging the Prophetic Insights of Jacques Ellul*. Edited by David Gill and David Lovekin (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publisher, 2018), 12-44.
- ⁶³ Ibid.,
- ⁶⁴ Ibid., 29.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid., 30.
- ⁶⁶ Jacques Ellul, *Living Faith: Belief and Doubt in a Perilous World*. Translated by Peter Heinegg. (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), 194-195.
- ⁶⁷ See Peter Fallon, *Propaganda 2.1: Understanding Propaganda in the Digital Age*. (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2022).
- ⁶⁸ See Statista and "23 Top Social Media Sites to Consider for Your Brand in 2024" by Tamilore Oladipo, April 24, 2024).
- ⁶⁹ Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore. *The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects*. (New York: Bantam Books, 1967), 113.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid., 26.
- ⁷¹ See Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, (New York: Methuen, 1982), 78-116.
- ⁷² Jacques Ellul, "The Image-Oriented Person," *The Humiliation of the Word*, trans. Joyce Main Hanks (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans), 204-227.
- ⁷³ Ibid., 210.
- ⁷⁴ Ibid., 211
- ⁷⁵ Ibid., 212
- ⁷⁶ Ibid., 216
- ⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 221
- ⁷⁸ Firth J, Torous J, Stubbs B, Firth JA, Steiner GZ, Smith L, Alvarez-Jimenez M, Gleeson J, Vancampfort D, Armitage CJ, Sarris J. The "online brain": how the Internet may be changing our cognition. *World Psychiatry*. 2019 Jun;18(2):119-129. doi: 10.1002/wps.20617. PMID: 31059635; PMCID: PMC6502424.
- ⁷⁹ Center for Humane Technology Youth Toolkit, "Social Media and the Brain: Why is persuasive technology so hard to resist?" https://assets.websitefiles.com/5f0e1294f002b15080e1f2ff/612f8e3d037708d8c1a297ef_3%20-%20Social%20Media%20and%20the%20Brain%20Issue%20Guide.pdf
- ⁸⁰ Ibid.
- ⁸¹ Center for Humane Technology Youth Toolkit, "Social Media and the Brain: Why is persuasive technology so hard to resist?" https://assets.websitefiles.com/5f0e1294f002b15080e1f2ff/612f8e3d037708d8c1a297ef_3%20-%20Social%20Media%20and%20the%20Brain%20Issue%20Guide.pdf
- ⁸² Jacques Ellul, *The Humiliation of the Word*. Translated by Joyce Main Hanks. Grand Rapids: (Wm. B. Eerdmans 1985), 254.
- ⁸³ Alfred Korzybski, *Manhood of Humanity* (Lakeville: The International Non-Aristotelian Library Publishing Company, 1921), p. 3, 46-65. Also, see Geraldine E. Forsberg, *Critical Thinking in an Image World: Alfred Korzybski's Theoretical Principles Extended to Critical Television Evaluation*, (Lanham: University Press of America, 1993), 68-72.
- ⁸⁴ Geraldine E. Forsberg, *Critical Thinking in an Image World*, 83-84.

⁸⁵ *Humiliation of the Word*, 107.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 257.

⁸⁷ Jacques Ellul, *What I Believe*, 28

⁸⁸ Nurasia Natsir, Nuraziza Aliah, Zulkhaeriyah Zulkhaeriyah, Amiruddin Amiruddin, Farida Esmianti "The Impact of Language Changes Caused by Technology and Social Media" (*Language Literacy: Journal of Linguistics, Literature, and Language Teaching* Vol, 7, Number 1, 2023), 115-124.
<https://jurnal.uisu.ac.id/index.php/language-literacy/article/view/7021/pdf>
115.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁹¹ Irum Abbasi "The Influence of Technology on English Language and Literature" *English Language Teaching*; Vol. 13, No. 7; 2020 ISSN 1916-4742 E-ISSN 1916-4750 (Published by Canadian Center of Science and Education, 2020), 1-7. Retrieved on June 15, 2024,
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342051307_The_Influence_of_Technology_on_English_Language_and_Literature. 5.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 5

⁹³ See Psychology Today "Gaslighting" <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/gaslighting>. Accessed 30 June 2024.

⁹⁴ Isaiah 5:20 (AMP)

⁹⁵ Ellul, *Living Faith*, 231.

⁹⁶ Jacques Ellul, *Living Faith*, 4.

⁹⁷ Jacques Ellul, *Belief and Doubt*, 7.

⁹⁸ Ellul, *Perspectives on our Age*, 80.

⁹⁹ Ellul, *In Season Out of Season*, 197.

¹⁰⁰ David Gill, *The Word of God in the Ethics of Jacques Ellul*. ATLA Monograph Series, No. 20. (New Jersey: The American Theological Library Association and The Scarecrow Press, 1984), 114.

¹⁰¹ Rom. 8: 16

¹⁰² Jacques Ellul, *What I Believe*, 13.

¹⁰³ Jacques Ellul, *Presence in the Modern World*, 82.

¹⁰⁴ David Gill, *The Word of God*, 114

¹⁰⁵ Ellul, *Humiliation of the Word*, 34.

¹⁰⁶ David Gill, *The Word of God*, 114.

¹⁰⁷ Ellul, *In Season out of Season*, 199.

¹⁰⁸ David Gill, *The Word of God*, 117-118.

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